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# LETTER

TO THE

*Right Honorable LORD ALTHORP,*

&c. &c. &c.

ON MR. ATTWOOD'S MOTION FOR ENQUIRY,

TOUCHING THE STATE OF THE CURRENCY,

THE CAUSE AND KEY-STONE OF THE LATE AWFUL

DISTURBANCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

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Which has the greatest turpitude---the cowardly vindictive wretch who prompts, contrives, encourages the crime; or he, who thence committing it, acknowledges his guilt and penitently dies? [See notes, pp. 24, 27.]



BY THE REV. R. CRUTTWELL,

RECTOR OF SPEXHALL, SUFFOLK.



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1831.





## PREFACE.



LET no one imagine, that in advocating (as I have long done in tenderest compassion) the case of our suffering poor, I mean greatly to extenuate the guilt of those individuals—authors of the late outrageous proceedings of burning corn-stacks, destroying machinery, and other acts of gross injustice against the property of their neighbours. If, in a moral point of view, I condemn the conduct of one as being the greater culprit of the two, this in the eye of God and the law does not take away the guilt of the blindly wicked offender against both. The labourer suffers in most instances, because the employer suffers and has suffered severely before him; being thence no longer able to purchase labour without incurring certain loss. Neither, were it quite so easy for the class immediately above these to correct this evil, as many would at first sight imagine. The man who destroys food which the kind providence of God hath sent for his own and others' subsistence, dies justly by the law in mercy to his own starving family, whose sufferings are thus likely to become greatly aggravated (let the original cause of discontent be what it may) by that most atrocious of all acts—the wilful destruction of corn-stacks by nightly fires.

I feel it due also to Mr. A. Baring (referring to note, page 11.) to say—that as a banker, I hold his judgment doubtful by reason that, from the 'law of currency' which now exists, the interest of the community and the safety even of our best regulated banking-establish-

ments are set in open and constant hostility towards each other. This *may* be called “ emerging from the difficulties ” in which the subject was involved ! As a merchant, trading (as many do) upon the sure ground of a ‘ commission-agent,’ it *might* be that his own profit shall increase by the very circumstance working rapid destruction of manufacturing-capital at home, to the non-employment and consequent starvation of no inconsiderable portion of our operative classes. How far, does this *now* constitute Mr. Baring’s “ improved order of things ? ” As a money-capitalist (distinctly so called), I use the term ‘ overgrown,’ because by the present standard such money-capital is relatively DOUBLED IN VALUE, since the peace. Mr. Baring, therefore, upon the mere score of personal interest stands opposed to all the industrious classes, in the same ratio that industry and general property are ruinously depressed comparing money with equivalents now and before the peace. I merely judge then of Mr. Baring, by the same rule that I judge of other men ; liable to be misled by the same common oversight, by which (with the noble exception of six distinguished Peers in the Upper House), a similar motion for enquiry into the state of the country, at the close of the last session, was lost by a most complete and overwhelming majority. The present case forms a singular exception to the ordinary rule of judging, as well of persons as things. In all common transactions of life, I should blush to be thought capable of impugning the high integrity of Mr. Baring’s most honourable mind, in the remotest degree.

TO THE  
RIGHT HONORABLE LORD ALTHORP,  
CHANCELLOR OF HIS MAJESTY'S EXCHEQUER,

&c. &c. &c.

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*Spexhall, near Halesworth, Dec. 29, 1830.*

WILL your Lordship forgive me—if, with feelings of great and sincere respect, I venture to point out to you what appears to me a *most exceeding fallacy* comprised in your reply to Mr. Attwood (H. C. Dec. 13.)—proposing a committee of enquiry touching the currency question?

At a moment like the present—when, from this self-same oversight (now of more than fourteen years' duration) the people are in that dreadful state of suffering, and consequently high excitement, to be nearly bordering upon open and declared rebellion—I read with *deep regret*, that it was “the determination of  
“Ministers not to go into that question, from

“ the great importance to a commercial country  
 “ to have a fixed standard of value :” meaning,  
 I presume, a standard *so far fixed* as to be  
 liable to no sudden—capricious—or uncalled-  
 for change ; in short, to no change of any sort  
 unwarranted by circumstances of the purest  
 equity.

In this respect, then, I entirely agree with  
 your Lordship ; though reluctantly compelled  
 to differ with you on another point equally  
 essential : inasmuch as our present standard  
 (calling it by that name, in reference to the  
 Bank-Cash-Resumption-Bill of 1819) was by  
 no means settled upon *just* principles, to begin  
 with. On the contrary, it went to the palpable  
*violation* of the equitable spirit of every pre-ex-  
 isting contract—diffusing its mischief through  
 all our agricultural, commercial, and financial  
 relations ; embracing a mass little short of  
 three or four thousand millions of pecuniary  
 obligations—great part of which were positively  
 contracted, and all “legally” and “justly” re-  
 cognized as previously payable, in currency  
 depreciated 50 per cent. : to the violation (I  
 repeat) of every contract, either subsisting at  
 the return of peace in 1814, or any how likely

to be acted upon or affected, directly or indirectly, by taxes growing out of former wars or others which might accidentally be called for at any future time.

What I would therefore here respectfully suggest to your Lordship's most earnest and immediate attention, is this—that even with our present nominal gold currency, liable (as it must be) to be so constantly acted upon by our existing war taxes and burthens, and constituting (in your Lordship's reply to Mr. Attwood) the sole ground of objection, on the part of Ministers, to submit the question to the fair test of cool and dispassionate investigation ; we neither have nor can have, notwithstanding, any thing deserving the name of a “fixed” standard of value.

There is however some unavoidable obscurity in the foregoing remark, which I will now as concisely as possible endeavour to explain ; though at the risk of tediously repeating language which I have often used before.

The corn-bill of 1815—still in partial operation, and most ruinously so in respect of certain classes—aims to create (but—How?) an artificial tax-price of *eighty* shillings the quar-

ter of wheat to English consumers ; the average gold or silver price of other countries, at most not exceeding *forty* shillings or half the said amount. Again ; the cost price of so much tea being £100, an *ad valorem* tax of £100 more doubles at once the price of tea to our own consumers : depreciating however, at the same time, money—in respect of tea, just 50 per cent. All other *taxed* and *taxable* commodities go (of necessity and justly so) to affect the principle of money\* precisely after the same manner : the duty on some articles (tobacco, for instance) being as high as ten, twelve, and

\* It will be necessary that I here call to the recollection of Ministers that singular resolution of the House of Commons in Mr. Vansittart's administration, that there was *no depreciation* of our currency, even at the very time when gold in respect of paper in the bullion market was at an open premium of more than 30 per cent. And this, which is still more to my present purpose, in direct opposition to the foregoing most just and undeniable principle—that the true measure of depreciation is in the rate of our own necessary taxation. It were further curious to note, that with all his affectation and conceit upon the subject, giving something like a plausibility and consistency to his usual tone of abuse and contemptuous treatment of the injurious policy of our money-regulations generally ; even Cobbett's acute mind, was notwithstanding unable sufficiently to penetrate the subject to ascertain the above *nice* distinction, in regard both to the cause and extent of the true measure of depreciation.



fifteen hundred per cent. And this, leaving the almost incalculable amount of *indirect* taxes wholly out of view.

Now surely, in such a case, it may be fair to ask (and no where, I humbly suggest, with so much propriety as in a committee of either House of Parliament)—Which is the “standard” that we speak of, when the question refers to our present money, as the *supposed* “fixed” standard, so highly beneficial to us as a great commercial nation? That is (in reference to the foregoing extract from your Lordship’s speech)—Is the price of wheat, tea, tobacco, &c. *untaxed* to be understood as meaning precisely one and the same thing (called a standard), with the price of those articles *taxed* from one to ten, twelve, and fifteen hundred per cent.?

The above argument will I believe be found equally conclusive in the way of accounting for all our present difficulties, past losses, and anticipated dangers; with the degree of chance yet afforded us, of abating the first—mitigating the second—and preventing a dreadful fulfilment of the third altogether. Likewise, of putting us on our guard against the numberless projected experiments of consummate

state-quackery — madness — folly—mischief—pre-meditated plunder,\* violence, endless confusion, bloodshed and revolution, with which the country at *this time* almost every where abounds. It may also serve to shew, that we have still something further to *learn*, as regards even many of the very simplest elements on which our almost existence as a commercial country ultimately depends.

I could wish to speak, my Lord, of this oversight wholly without prejudice, and to avoid giving pain to a single individual. And happy is it for us, in one respect, that so universal has been the infatuation of the country, by which we have arrived at the awful precipice on which we now stand : in other words, so difficult and uninviting is the subject to grapple with, in all its numberless and extensive ramifications, that **FEW** indeed are *entitled* to exercise the odiously invidious task of attaching criminality to others—wholly free, at the same time, from the risk of incurring some portion of the like blame themselves. It doubtless *was* an “oversight,” committed by every one of your Lordship’s official predecessors (I quite admit, most “un-

\* An *honorable* member lately proposed “selling the crown-lands !”



intentionally effected by them," to use your own expression)—by all our finance, bullion, and corn committees—by both Houses of Parliament—in a very great degree, by all our best writers on matters of financial and political science—by the whole of our violent and unprincipled demagogues, so far as concerns the *origin* of our present evils, including also the *remedy* to be applied; in short, by all classes of persons and by men of all parties (excepting only that very small number, among whom I hold it the greatest happiness of my life to be recognized as one) in respect of this most vitally important and profound national question. Saying thus much then, my Lord, nothing I trust can be here taken, as savouring of the slightest personal incivility or disrespect to yourself.

But the great and most crying mischief of all to which I here wish more especially to call your Lordship's attention, is this— a mischief, I observe, not originally of government *creation*; though subsequently fostered and encouraged by our present currency-regulations (public consent, tacitly at least, still favoring the delusion of metallic payments—on the basis of a virtually long-exploded standard of our

ancient coins): that after a course of inevitable war-taxation, *justly* depreciating the standard of our paper debts and obligations 50 per cent. we have now for fifteen years together been endeavouring to enforce a new standard of *double value*, upon all the “debtor” transactions of the empire. And this, with the grossest of all possible perversions of language, we still call “a *preservation* of national faith:” in defiance, moreover, of our existing corn-laws—the principle of which, as affecting the currency, were again to produce a similar depreciation; thus *again* acting, in direct contravention of your Lordship’s avowed intention to waive the proposed enquiry, under the notion that our *present standard* is one of “fixed” and undeviating value! That is, we have really two standards at one and the same moment, without perceiving it; the standard of the corn-laws, and the standard of Mr. Peel’s bill. The former aims to produce an *extension* in the current amount of our circulation 50 per cent. beyond its intrinsic value, in respect of wheat estimated in foreign gold; and which, if extended to manufactured articles as well, would produce the general relief required. The

latter, even as regards farm produce, has a constantly counteracting tendency to *diminish* the amount of circulation; driving us back again, with all the hopelessness of utter ruin before our eyes, to a state of currency necessarily “contracted” to so enormous an extent, as with our still existing burthens, to diminish the means of finding labour for nearly half the working classes, even in farming districts, without causing to the legitimate employer a most overwhelming loss: while in some of our manufacturing districts, the evil now operates in a degree of ten-fold augmented mischief. In proof of this last assertion, I beg leave respectfully to refer your Lordship to a perusal of my printed letter to the noble Lord Goderich, published at Hatchard’s now more than three years ago.

It is by such means that we have brought upon ourselves and upon posterity a revolution of property—a regular system, it may be termed, of *legal* and *voluntary* confiscation—so dreadfully extensive and complete to millions of innocent sufferers, in its past—present—and future consequences; that, if much longer *persisted* in, it will assuredly bring down upon the entire nation some sort of moral retribution,

for the injustice and unnecessary suffering hereby inflicted on the labouring classes. This will probably happen, in the disorganization of the whole frame-work of society as now subsisting amongst us ; involving, in its final and no very remote issue, all classes (innocent as well as guilty) in one common wreck of total and inextinguishable ruin. For myself, I feel perfectly assured—and this from a chain of close-connected reasoning long since laid down, that (as a nation) we are sinking by a most *rapid course* of moral as well as civil revolution. And perhaps among all the features of national character that have more recently developed themselves, in our present highly diseased political condition, there is none worse than that most unaccountably perverse apathy (or rather, more properly speaking, *selfishness*) regarding the great puzzling question of cause and effect, as likewise of remedy best adapted to the case before us, which nearly runs through ALL of our more influential classes.\* But for this, indeed,

\* I must here notice a late observation made by Mr. A. Baring, in the House of Commons Nov. the 5th.—“ The “ currency-question (he observed) on which from the year

operating as it now has done for so many years, the evil never could have arrived at its present alarming height. And upon the same principle, I suppose, we may account in most instances of great national convulsion, for the usual kind of indiscriminate retaliatory infliction, by which any long continuance of unredressed wrongs, bearing upon numerous portions of a

“1815, the country had been in a state of agitation and agony, was just *emerging from the difficulties* in which it had been involved; and there was a reasonable hope and expectation of a satisfactory issue. If there was one thing which any man ought to study, who wished well to the general interests of the country, and particularly to the advantage of the poor and working classes, which all professed to have so much at heart—if there was one thing which would tend more than any other to their benefit, it was the abstaining from disturbing this *improved order of things* by extravagant statements at the present period.”

I have some notion, looking to past events of the last few months only, it would be difficult to make assertions much more “extravagant” than some expressions to be found in Mr. Baring’s own speech. In dealing with the judgment of Mr. Baring on subjects like the present, I should perhaps find it allowable without much want of charity, to use the *argumentum ad hominem* in preference to the *argumentum ad rem*! Without the slightest personality of feeling, I object to Mr. Baring—as a banker—a merchant—and likewise, an overgrown money-capitalist; and therefore, as opposed in apparent interest (on this great question) to the whole body of land proprietors, including owners, occupiers, and labourers of every description.

heretofore thriving and industrious population, at length spreads ruin and destruction over the whole of its inhabitants.

Nothing however can be more indisputably certain, than that with our existing load of taxes and artificial private burthens, even *legally* recognized by the corn-bill as “due” only in depreciated currency, the people cannot possibly bear a continuance of our present metallic standard. At the same time, to reduce taxes upon the popular notions of what are called “retrenchment” and “economy” on the part of *government* (unless the principle were really carried into the whole aggregate amount of our national transactions, both public and private—still, not lessening the number of persons actually employed), while great individual mischief and often injustice were sure to be effected by it; not an atom of real *benefit* would thence accrue to the suffering classes: the relief so produced, even when it can be truly called such, almost exclusively going into the pockets of those persons who would by no means be entitled *in strict justice* to receive it. For example—What specific rate of general benefit can the country be said to have derived



—as regards that portion of the community most distressed, from the already enormous (and sometimes *boasted*) amount of reduced taxation, accomplished since the peace? Omitting to notice here its manifestly hurtful effect on the more immediate objects of all such comparatively insignificant parsimony, the contrary proof may be seen in the *fact*—that every succeeding year produces, and must continue to produce, a still further abstraction of so much appropriated productive capital, among the industrious classes generally: thence, greatly adding both to the number and destitution of our previously unemployed poor. That which really is wanted, is a fair assimilation of our expenditure, in all respects, to our now greatly diminished means: a general, universal, and immediate abatement of all burthens one-half—all taxes—all prices—all rents, &c. (not already reduced since the peace), and therewith the trade in corn *free* down to the price of 40s. the quarter of wheat: in short a reduction, by the same scale, of all fixed charges upon property and industry of every denomination. Adjusting, then, our present standard (*raising* it if gold—*reducing* it if paper) upon the forego-

ing logically established FACT of its former depreciation, would instantly effect this most desirable object, without loss or real injury to a single individual : causing a saving, to be chiefly felt hereafter by those now toiling wholly without profit and scarcely with a bare subsistence for their labour, little short—all things included—from fifty to sixty millions sterling a-year. For in this proportion, it may safely be assumed, were our burthens relatively increased, from the spontaneous change in the value of money since 1815.

Most earnestly, therefore, would I beg to recommend to a virtuous and enlightened English ministry, to weigh well all the circumstances of this proposal against the fanciful and vain conceit, of thinking to relieve the *immediate* and *pressing* wants of a starving tumultuous population, by the wild—I had almost said, *criminal*—project (looking to the imperative demand for giving instant relief!) of sinking this and every other rational enquiry, in the shockingly empty *bug-bear* of “Parliamentary Reform!” At such a time (not to question the abstract principle of reform, respecting which, I would claim myself a more than ordinary *right* and



personal *interest* to be heard)—at a moment like the present, to talk of “parliamentary” reform—with a serious view to *benefit* the poorer classes ; one would think (like many other fanciful theories of the day) could never have any other object beyond that of embarrassing the government and dividing the country, diverting the public mind and leading it astray from the great primary pursuit which demands every man’s regard, capable of rational and humane reflection : namely, to ascertain the *readiest* mode of abating that first and main exciting CAUSE of suffering, discontent, and consequent proneness to riot and mischief among the labouring poor, out of which every secondary symptom of political disease and unsoundness (past as well as present) may be clearly traced to have arisen.

We have here then an evil, threatening the very safety and existence of the constitution—clearly deducible from one single specific FACT—a spontaneous change in the intrinsic value of our currency, at the return of peace, by the rate of 50 per cent. Previously, notwithstanding the terrific moral evils of war, the country was in a state of progressively

increasing improvement perfectly unparalleled in its history. This improvement, but for the present “oversight” with its train of inevitable and interminable mischiefs, was, in the natural course of things, absolutely without a *limit*—scarcely liable to receive a check: I mean, had the only obvious and simple remedy been applied, when the evil first began to operate. Moreover, we then had a parliament constituted as it *now* is, and *has been*, since the septennial act passed in the reign of George the First. And now, when the country is showing strong and unquestionable symptoms of an approaching “crisis,” almost too dreadful to be contemplated without horror—the immediate consequence of sufferings and privations which the people have long endured, in a degree of hourly increasing aggravation that hardly admits, without danger, of a single moment’s delay:—at such a moment, I repeat with astonishment! is the floor of parliament deluged with petitions, in their very nature frivolous and highly objectionable—as to their perfect inadequacy of meeting the real wants of a people, for years impoverished by a virtual doubly increased burthen of taxes; naturally resulting, in the first

instance, from a state of blindness to the fact before mentioned; and now, subsequently, adopting the term *parliamentary* in lieu of that of national—individual—and *personal* reform. For I am here fully prepared to shew, after all that has been said, done, and left undone, in regard to the strange anomaly of a great and flourishing nation being ruined, impoverished, and *starved* (comparatively, so to speak) by reason of its natural abundance and overflowing artificial wealth; that, in reality, a spirit of detested avaricious selfishness lies at the bottom of this our bitter cup—and sure pledge of every anticipated and future mischief! By mistaking money—the *sign* of wealth, for the *substance* of wealth itself (thence ‘pocketing’ too the fraudulent amount of gain of which each individual *fancied* himself the sudden and unexpected possessor), it were difficult to say, what portion of our English community stands wholly acquitted of contributing, in some degree, to bring about (unintentionally so—it *may* be, I fully admit) this frightful state of things in which the whole country at present stands.

Seeing little motive for talking of ‘parliamentary’ reform beyond that of evading the

main question, as regards the real wants and distresses of the poorer classes ; I will here say of the great bulk of ‘ reformers ’ (with some slight allowance only for a few well-meaning though mistaken individuals) that, for the most part, they are quite as ignorant—quite as selfish—and quite as unprincipled, as any other portion of the whole community. To those really honest in their notions of *such* reform, I would simply ask one single question—Do they seriously in their conscience believe, under a state of currency in which millions of our poor people are only half-employed, half-fed, and therefore rebellious, turbulent, and discontented, that by changing the form of representation—voting by ballot—with annual parliaments—no pensions, sinecures, and so forth, the poor people above described would get a single day’s more employment—a single loaf the more, by the end of the week—with that remission (so much and justly needed) from our virtually augmented taxation and other burthens, amounting to little short of from fifty to sixty millions sterling a-year ? The poor wholly out of employment, of which there are now thousands and tens of thousands able

and willing to work, are at this moment paying an exorbitant tax price for bread amounting to a direct famine price, in this their particularly hard and truly distressing case. The high price of bread, however, is not entirely to be accounted for upon the principles of our de-ranked state of currency. It is nevertheless owing to that, in a very great degree; operating slowly though surely through the last ten or twelve years. It is also owing to other temporary and local circumstances:—to the present disturbed state of the continent, to our own vicious corn laws, to the last two or three defective harvests in this our own country: lastly, and not slightly, to the insane acts of these our poor ‘misguided’ people themselves; destroying that by fire of which there was already a partial scarcity, thereby adding to the severity of their own previous sufferings!

Among others, I would put the above question on ‘reform’ (writing with great respect) to the present noble and enlightened Lord Brougham. And let his Grace of Wellington, too, with all his disdain of knowledge—as regards the CURRENCY, say in what respect the poor ‘poverty-struck’ Irish are benefitted, by

his favorite panacea—‘ emancipation !’ The first and greatest want of both countries—England as well as Ireland, is a just equalization of the standard, reducing all burthens HALF.

In the course of the last fifteen years, I have frequently been induced, with an earnestness (which some perhaps would call a pertinacious obstinacy of manner) not *unbefitting*, I would hope, the important seriousness of so awful and grave a subject, to urge upon several of your Lordship’s predecessors in office, as likewise many of their colleagues, the *necessity* (for so it seems to me) of almost exclusively devoting ourselves to a minute examination and re-hearing, by counter-evidence, of all matters any how connected with this great subject of the currency. That most fatal errors have been committed respecting it, no shadow of a doubt can now exist upon the mind of any person endued with the commonest faculty of observation and of close consecutive reasoning. That it still continues to be open to the constant detection of most important mistakes, the foregoing simple and *friendly* argument (for as such I would here wish it to be received—referring to pp. 2, 3 and 4), your Lordship’s can-



dor and good sense will I trust readily and nowise captiously concede. I have often before said and will here confidently re-assert the same thing, that from no period in the history of the world can there be adduced any written evidence to shew, that the true theory of money has been correctly or even tolerably understood: and further, that this knowledge (such as it is) were now less adequately adapted than on former occasions, to the peculiarly *new* and trying circumstances of difficulty and danger in which we are involved; admitting of no means of escape or extrication for us, except those which I have laboured thus long and earnestly to recommend. I should have little doubt myself, that many of the greatest revolutions and overthrows of mighty empires which have ever happened—could their now long-lost DATA be recovered, might be easily shown to have grown out of causes in principle not much unlike those from which our own embarrassments at this time may clearly be deduced. The dreadful horrors of the French Revolution, bursting into a general flame in or about the years 1789-90, evidently sprung from derangements of that country's financial means—caused, in

the first instance, by the worse than profligate expenditure of wealth and treasure incurred by the wars of Louis the Fourteenth.

As a point, therefore, of pure duty to Ministers not less than to the country, I have repeatedly and respectfully offered to persons high in office, my own humble assistance, in the way of removing (by personal conference) doubts which may be thought easily to have suggested themselves—allowing for the much greater difficulty of expressing oneself by writing than by simple *viva voce* communication: such persons often wanting (it may also be supposed, in the midst of other numberless official causes of mental doubt and abstraction) time and opportunity indispensably requisite to do full justice to a subject *so vast* and of such almost insurmountable difficulty. My labours indeed have been given to the pursuit, with an intensity of feeling and eagerness of which but few persons engaged actively in the every-day pursuits of common life, can easily form to themselves any tolerable conception.\* What the

\* As one instance of this, I will here take the liberty to mention, that my printed letter to Lord Goderich (written more than three years ago and then occasioned by a similar



sensations or motives of such individuals may have been, I will not here attempt to scrutinize over-narrowly. Nevertheless, I have much to lament that such offers to procure an audience have been uniformly—repeatedly—uncourteously—nay often, I must be allowed to say, most rudely—contemptuously—and insultingly rejected! But, with reference to the late dreadful excesses of incendiarism and other illegal acts of violence in all parts of England, by which the peace and even safety of the kingdom has been invaded; I would now put it to the dispassionate feelings of every one of those Ministers before referred to, to say—which course of proceeding would have been more honorable, more natural to expect even in common courtesy from one gentleman of education to another; which would have best squared with their public duties for which they are to be held in the deepest sense (at least *morally*) responsible; which had been more

declaration to that of your Lordship's, forming the subject of the present letter), including the trouble of transcribing two or three copies, cost me five whole days and nights in one week without once even taking off my clothes or lying down in bed. To this letter has no sort of answer ever been received!!

statesman-like—more just—more mercifully consistent with the mild spirit of English jurisprudence:—to *remove* the existing “cause” of all such outrageous proceedings on the part of our starving population, by timely applying that kind of remedy which both justice and policy as well as the *law* itself pointed out ;—or otherwise, as is now become necessary, to repress that violence (and this—for how long, think we?) by strong measures of counter-intimidation, enforced by the most extreme severity of penal execution?\*

\* The following is copied from a respectable country newspaper. “The learned Judge, in passing the awful sentence of the law upon the prisoner, Thomas Goodman (convicted of *arson*, at the Lewes assize), apprised him that he could not hold out any hopes of mercy. The prisoner made a full confession of his guilt, and attributed his untimely end to that notorious demagogue William Cobbett, who delivered a public lecture at Battle, some time ago, in which he told his auditors that unless the farmers would consent to pay better wages to their labourers, the fires which were then going on in Kent, might also take place in this county (Sussex), and that the boundary between the counties was but imaginary. The unfortunate young man who is only eighteen years of age, confesses that he was so stirred up by the words of Cobbett, that his brain was nearly turned ; and that he was under the impression that nothing but the destruction of property by fire at night would effect that species of revolution, the necessity of which was so strongly enforced by the arch lecturer.”

Here, then, I again venture to tender the same offer of my services to your Lordship, and to those other enlightened and upright individuals at present associated with you in office: one however, a noble lord, I must greatly regret to think (when member of a former cabinet), pledged gratuitously to maintain a similar resolution with your Lordship's—even couched in terms still more rigid and inflexible; namely, that “so long as he continued to be in office, he *never would consent* to an “alteration of the present standard of value.” The question however here is—not, whether we shall do, or not do, this or that; but whether we shall *enquire*: whether we shall persist in our state of convicted ignorance; or, by rationally coming at the truth, furnish to ourselves the honorable opportunity of acknowledging past errors, with the laudable design of correcting them in future! I am not therefore to be intimidated or shaken from my purpose of promoting a measure which I feel morally convinced would be productive of the greatest practical benefit to the country, by this precipitate—captious—and most *unwise* avowal of my Lord Goderich, differing as I do with him in opinion. I repeat my declaration, before

the country, that I am prepared *fully to substantiate*—to the perfect satisfaction even of the noble Lord himself, meaning by these remarks no personal disrespect or incivility to him in the slightest degree—before either one or all of his Majesty's present Ministers severally or conjointly—in a committee of either House of Parliament—or, in presence of that most excellent, upright and learned body—the English Judges, every one of the positions before laid down ; in support and justification of my proposal for reducing all existing burthens half—on the strictest grounds of equity, of policy, of law, and common sense. And this moreover, barring the common *oversight*, in a way fully to acquit every former administration of all those rancorous and unjust accusations—of having arbitrarily and wantonly tampered with the currency—first, by the Restriction-Act in 1797 ; secondly, by the Resumption-Bill in 1819 : proving, in the former case, that the best interests of the country were sensibly forwarded and promoted by that law ; in the latter case, that although the tendency of the measure from the beginning was highly injurious—yet, that such law (commonly known by the name of Peel's bill) did not *create the*

*mischiefs* of which we now complain. They having spontaneously originated four years before that bill was introduced into parliament, and which was then loudly called-for by a very large majority of the whole community—back-ed—headed—encouraged—and clamorously enforced—by all the ignorant and unprincipled demagogue-party, pinning their silly faith (as many still do) upon the hebdomadal vulgar abuse of a certain odiously unprincipled writer, whose very name were almost a blot upon the page in which it happens to be written.\*

I would here however simply premise for your Lordship's intermediate reflection, that I have very often found it much easier to bring ample conviction to a person's mind, desirous of information—however much before-hand sceptically disposed, by one single hour's friendly and unreserved colloquy (which, on the part of Ministers, I still never could obtain); than the same person could otherwise have acquired,

\* I use the term "demagogue-party," with considerable reluctance. Nevertheless, it were impossible to conceal from oneself the fact—that his influence has been most pernicious, in exciting the worst feelings of cruel, unjust, and ignorant prejudice against bankers, farmers, the clergy, and others: the effect of which malignant influence, as respects the clergy in particular, the county of Suffolk has lately furnished a noted and most disgraceful example.

with a heavy sacrifice of the closest reading, aided by advantages of privacy and reflection which but seldom belong to those placed in high official situations. In truth, the subject is so enormous and seemingly *untangible* (taken in its multitudinous bearings), to one not already 'initiated' and somewhat familiarized with its principles—the effect only of previous study; that many persons not knowing how and where *to grasp it*, at the outset—hardly daring even to speak upon the subject, would quickly be led to abandon the pursuit altogether, in very 'despondency' of being able to understand its several details; resting as they do notwithstanding (when taken singly) on but few principles, and those of the very purest and simplest kind.

Begging your acceptance of the accompanying little pamphlet—*Salvâ Fide*—published last spring, but which unfortunately shared the same fate of *unkind neglect* with many others that preceded it; I have now the honor to subscribe myself, with very high respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble Servant,

RICHARD CRUTTWELL.



## POSTSCRIPT.

With great personal esteem for Mr. Attwood, whose friendship I should be most unwilling to forfeit, and in high and grateful commendation of his praise-worthy perseverance in labouring to bring the currency-question fairly and fully before the public, in his seat in the House of Commons; and though *in the main* his views upon the subject nearly coincide with my own; truth and candor yet compel me to say, there are some points (and those rather of considerable moment) in which there is, notwithstanding, a material difference between us. Still however, my Lord, why refuse to *enquire*? Why not with courteous condescension and respect (the question having no present application to your Lordship) freely take information, let it come from whence it will? Mr. Attwood says—Mr. Western says—Mr. Hudson Gurney says (all gentlemen of talent and high unimpeachable integrity)—I say myself also, after devoting fifteen anxious years to the subject—and many others *now* say with us, that the currency is at the bottom of every mischief: yet affording however, if rightly understood, the

only possible chance we have left, of averting further evils—compared with which, those going before are to be taken but as so many of the merest *trifles*! Is England a country to be bullied into revolution, by the mere taunts and ribaldry of such a man as William Cobbett? one who insolently dares and defies you to do the very thing which, he well knows, would ensure her salvation almost beyond the possibility of failure! I repeat—Why leave on Ministers' own shoulders (by *refusing* to enquire) a weight of personal responsibility so infinitely awful, that I would not take upon myself a hundredth part of the blame which must attach, and eventually will be *sure to fall*, somewhere—with perhaps an almost equal chance of its falling right as wrong, and wrong as right—no! not for the brightest reward the present world could bestow.

With our present standard (if it *deserves* the name), there are three separate contingent events—liable to occur—one, more especially, in any year, almost in any day; either of which *happening*, would be sure to revolutionize the kingdom (turning every thing topsy-turvy), alike beyond the reach of prevention



as of cure, if once *the slightest breach in the embankment be suffered to take place !* They are each closely interwoven and connected with the wretchedly mistaken policy of our currency-regulations ; being, further, in constantly slow and progressive operation and advancement towards the accomplishment of their sure final result. Recent ‘awakening’ occurrences, materially founded on the partial existence of one of them, ought fairly to be taken (if duly perceived) as a sort of corroborative proof of the general truth and accuracy of what I here say. The same thing occurring in any other country in Europe—a virtual doubling of all its existing burthens, would long ago have produced the fatal crisis—of which, by the superior purity of our own institutions, we have as yet felt a few only of the slighter symptoms. In particular, to the influence of our humane system of poor-laws, is this previous exemption from far greater mischiefs mainly to be ascribed : still admitting, however, that other pernicious causes acting upon that system, have latterly gone far towards rendering it unpopular, from our common aptitude to mistake effects for causes and causes for effects.

In conclusion, I here venture to *notice* two other plans of relief, before the House of Commons—Lord Nugent's, on the compulsory employment of agricultural labourers; and Mr. Wilnot Horton's, on the promoting of emigration. It were impossible too highly to respect the motives by which those estimable persons are actuated in their respective undertakings. For the first, however, it appears to me a little to exceed the province of judicious legislation, to think of *enforcing* employment upon farmers, when there is little beyond certain 'loss' to be expected from employing labourers in the ordinary way: and such I conceive must continue to be the case while the present metallic standard shall be suffered to exist, paralyzing industry in every shape. In reference to the second plan, let that evil (of the standard) be once corrected, and the *supposed* "redundancy" of population will be found only as in the mere relation of cause and effect; and hence, by removing the cause the effect will cease.

R. C.















